**CONSUMER INFORMATION**
 4 **HOME ECONOMICS—FAMILY LIVING NO. 17—1970**
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What would you like to be walking on right now? Is it soft, luxurious carpeting or a sleek and beautiful hardwood floor?

Are you interested in getting the most for your investment when you purchase either of these flooring materials? Among the many possibilities, let's consider hardwood flooring and wall to wall carpeting.

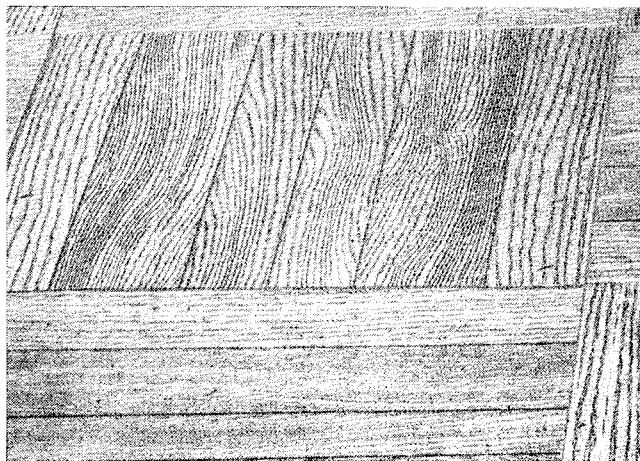
Some things to decide first are:

1. total dollars to spend on flooring,
2. strong preference or dislike of either,
3. total design look in room, area or house,
4. function of room to be floored.

Just what is a good buy, and how do you decide? First, let's consider hardwood flooring. There are many grades, widths, shapes, and woods to pick from. The most common wood used for flooring is oak. Regardless of the grade, oak wears very well; it is hard and durable.

You can buy flooring unfinished or prefinished, in even or random width strips or blocks. If you are willing to finish the floors, then the degree of lightness or darkness desired is up to you. Wood can take any color stain. You may even be daring and stain your floors in your favorite color, such as green or blue.

Prices vary for the various grades and the amount of finishing needed. The less you have to do, the higher the price. For instance, a top grade prefinished block with an adhesive back is almost double the price of an unfinished block without an adhesive back.



Hardwood flooring

The lower grades may have more irregularities, but they can be interesting in design. If you are planning to cover up most of your hardwood flooring with a room size rug or wall to wall carpeting, it is not actually necessary to have the best available grade of hardwood flooring.

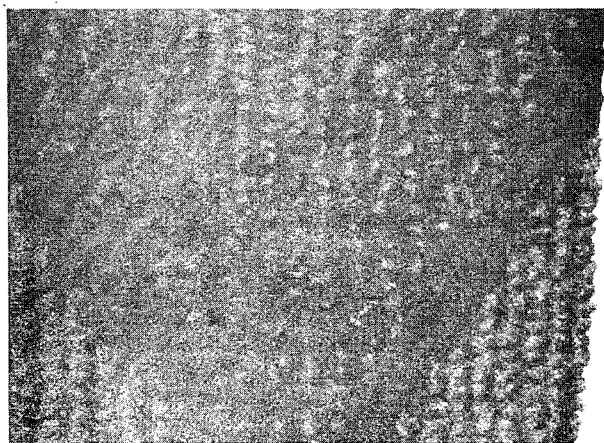
An important rule is to shop and compare. You will be surprised at the difference in prices. A few cents per board foot can add up quickly if you are flooring a large area.

If you have your heart set on carpet, then here are some questions to answer before you shop.

1. Where is the carpet to be used?
2. How heavy is the traffic in that area?
3. How long are you planning to live in your present home?
4. How much money can you spend for flooring? (include pad and installation)
5. What colors would you be happy with? Will you start a new decorating scheme with your carpet, or will it go with your existing color scheme?

Carpet may add to your decorating scheme and can unify a room with a luxurious look and texture. Cleaning is made easier with one piece of equipment. Carpet is warm and lessens noise in the area where it is placed.

It seems there are even more choices of carpet than of hardwood flooring. Just remember that the more yarns or tufts per square inch, the better the carpet will wear, regardless of the type of fiber. Each of the fibers has wearing characteristics you should become familiar with. A rule of thumb



Looped pile carpet



Cut pile carpet

saying is "the deeper, the denser, the better." Dig your fingers into the pile. How easily do you feel the backing? Shags cannot be judged as other carpeting. The yarns are meant to fall in many directions so the tufts have to be far apart.

The following fibers are the most common on the market today, with a typical range of prices per square yard for each: wool, \$9.25-20; nylon, \$5.00-15; olefin, \$4.00-8; acrylic, \$7.00-14; acrylic-modacrylic, \$7.00-14; polyesters, \$6.00-15. Also on the market are cotton and rayon, but they are not too common in carpeting.

The range of installation prices per square yard is as follows: on wood, \$2.10 to 2.50; and on concrete, \$2.20 to 2.40.

In summary, decide how much you can spend for your flooring. If hardwood floors are what you want, decide what specific features you desire, such as strips, blocks, prefinished, or unfinished.

In purchasing carpet, look for fiber content and density of tufts. A reliable store and brand will stand behind their product. Acquaint yourself with the quantity and quality available on the market today by comparing store merchandise and prices.

Adapted with permission from "Consumer Facts," Purdue University, by Susan Kerns, Department of Equipment and Family Housing

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